

About Us, Adoption, Fostering, Volunteering, and Sponsorship



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About Us

Animal Friends of Connecticut, Inc. is a nonprofit, no-kill shelter dedicated to the protection of animals. It's an all-volunteer organization that rescues stray, abandoned, abused and handicapped cats. All animals are given needed medical care, vaccinations and spayed or neutered, then cared for at our shelter until an appropriate placement can be found.

Pledge to Adopt Your Next Pet

Although AFOC may have kittens available for adoption, we encourage all potential adopters to consider the rewards of adopting an adult animal.

Interested in adopting?

- Check our website and discover the pets that are up for adoption.
- Please call **860-225-1339** for more information.

Foster

Fostering is an important part of the adoption process. With the help of an amazing group of foster volunteers, we give animals that aren't yet ready for adoption a chance to be placed in foster homes. Not only is it easy, fun and one of the most rewarding things you can do for a homeless pet and for yourself, fostering gives an animal the love and attention they desperately need, greatly increasing their chances of being adopted.

Volunteer

AFOC is run entirely by dedicated volunteers. There are plenty of opportunities to help! AFOC volunteers are people like you, who love animals. If you can donate your time, your help will be gladly appreciated! For more information call us at **860-225-1339**.

Sponsorship Program:

Adopting a pet may not be possible in your future, but you can still help by sponsoring a pet. We have many cats that may not be adoptable due to age or medical condition and you may be a perfect fit to become a sponsor so let's connect!

AFOC's sponsorship program began in 2003 and over the years we've connected with many generous people who can't adopt with a special AFOC feline. A rescued cat's story may touch a caring person like you, and you may want to help. If you find it difficult to choose, we offer Kitty-Go-Round where you'll receive periodic cards from different felines and get status updates from your sponsored pets.

Sponsorships can be given to a friend as a gift. You can also visit our shelter to volunteer or speak with a resident to help build a connection. As always, we offer the opportunity to come and visit your sponsored pet during available hours.

- **Select** the wonderful cat you want to sponsor. Remember, it's OK for kitties to have more than one sponsor.
- **Use the Donate** link to set up your monthly payments, and you'll receive updates about your kitty in no time. The minimum donation is a low \$10 a month. The money you donate will help with our many bills such as vet visits, medicine, cat food, and lots and lots of litter.

You may be a perfect fit to become a sponsor, but you may not know how important it is to our kitties, how easy it is to set up, and how you can enhance your sponsorship to fit your individual lifestyle.

Don't delay; come join our valued group of generous, caring sponsors. Your special kitty is waiting for you now.

- Here's how to sponsor:
- Visit our website at <https://www.animalfriendsofct.org/sponsorship-program>, click on the sponsorship link.
- Contact us at afoc@afocinc.org to start your own customized sponsorship!



Like all weathermen, Punxsutawny Phil makes mistakes, but despite that fact this groundhog's yearly prediction on the nearness of spring remains law to some.

Every February 2nd, Phil is abducted from his home in Punxsutawny, Pennsylvania, held up in front of an awestruck crowd and forced to tell the masses how much longer they're going to have to bear the winter. In the off season, a group called the Inner Circle cares for Phil and his wife Phyllis.

Another Tennessee Kitten Rescue — George M.

I received a call from my niece, who recently moved to Tennessee, that a small animal shelter near her was going to euthanize all the cats and kittens that they had as they had run out of room and there were no adoptions taking place.

She wanted to know if we would be able to take the 27 kittens, 4 mothers and 2 bonded pairs that were living at the shelter. I asked that if we were able to take them, how would they get to CT.

She said that a concerned woman was willing to rent a van and transport them here.



After lining up the necessary fosters to care for them when they arrived, I told her yes, send them up. The transporter was going to drive all night and be here in the morning the following weekend.

All 9 fosters arrived at my house at 10 am on Sunday morning to welcome the kittens and cats that were arriving 15 minutes later.

One of the fosters asked who gets who and I said to "fight it out". That was not necessary however and everyone went home with their litter. Some with mothers and some without mothers.

I was concerned that one foster only got a bonded pair of adults, but she knew ahead of time what she was receiving. This turned out well as one of her cats was pregnant and gave birth 3 days later to 5 healthy kittens, which she instantly fell in love with.



All the kittens were posted on Facebook almost immediately and for the next week, I was getting 50 or more calls each day.

By Wednesday however all the kittens were reserved and eventually adopted.

Two of the fosters did set a record to become "foster failures". They decided to keep the kittens they had in only one day.



- Rona and Barry Gelber to Amy and Gary Ehle in memory of Minnie 17 ½ years old
- **Carmela and Robert Strickland in memory of Beverly Janowitch**
- Joseph Fleischmann In memory of Michele Pilver
- **Diane Tracy and Heather Defosses in memory of Michele Pilver**
- Myra Fishman in memory of Michele Pilver
- **Sandra Hastings in memory of 3 feral cats: Mr. Mystic Greysom, Oreo Doublestuff, and Tuxedo Tom**
- Bill and Trisha Morris in memory of Shay
- **Joan and John Nagy in memory of Sally and Hazel**
- Nancy and Al Kelland in memory of Joseph Annunziata
- **Berlin High School Class of 1961 Reunion Committee in memory of Joseph Annunziata**
- Jo-anne Bochicchio in memory of Shotzie, Jessie, LaceyLu and Killie
- **Mr. and Mrs. M.R.Halpin in memory of Beverly Janowetch**
- Joan Zito in memory of Beverly Janowetch
- **Ellen and Roger Sullivan in Memory of Beatrice Deresienski**
- Alfred and Josephine Quintiliano in Memory of Beatrice Deresienski
- **Jane and Vincent Oswecki in Memory of Beatrice Deresienski**
- Ms. Ellen Massucci in Memory of Beatrice Deresienski
- **Berlin High School Class of 1961 in Memory of Joseph Annunziata**
- Anne and Charles Dente in memory of Hansel
- **Urusla Korzenik wishes Patricia Fresk a Merry Christmas**
- Bill and Lynn Baccaro in memory of Joseph Annunziata
- **Andrea and Robert Schreiber in memory of Michele Pilver**
- George and Jacqueline Roraback in memory of John and Edna Shea, Judie Shea, Erica Roraback, TJ and Murph
- **Myra Fishman in memory of Arnold Holtman**



Petra a.k.a. Willow



Petra is the first CH kitten for AFOC. It was discovered shortly after she was rescued. Her foster expressed concerns about the strength of the kitten's hind legs and the squinting and winking in her right eye. A trip to the vet resulted in the diagnosis of Cerebellar Hypoplasia. We thought it was going to be hard to find an adopter but from George's first phone call with Carolyn, there was no question that she was the one. It was an instant decision. "Everything about her and her life was perfect!"

Carolyn was actually NOT looking for a kitten or a cat. She lost her last cat Shadow several years ago and the pain of losing her, the fear of experiencing it again and the mis-perceived guilt associated with "replacing" her had combined to be very compelling reasons for her NOT adopting another cat. But her mother's scan of the Hartford Courant at breakfast one morning, drew her eyes to an adorable white kitten with a black smudge across her face being offered as AFOC's "Pet of the Week". She showed Carolyn and, well, here's the rest of the story...

Carolyn, who sustained a head injury in high school, explains why she was compelled to adopt Petra: "We actually have some neurological symptoms in common". Carolyn lives in a multi-generational household with her parents who have two 18 year old rag doll cats, a 14 yr old Bichon and a 9 yr old Labradoodle. They all live on the first floor, and Carolyn & Petra share the bonus room upstairs. She and Willow

(Petra's new name) visit the "cousin" cat's and dog's often.

Willow, born in July, 2020, is still in a period of rapid growth and development, the effects of the CH are ever-changing. Carolyn won't know what long-term or chronic challenges Willow might have for another year. Many of the common symptoms of CH (impaired motor coordination, spatial awareness, and balance) have presented in Willow, but the level of severity is constantly in flux as she grows into her body, develops the strength to support it, and learns to adapt to control it. At this point Carolyn says, "It's a bit like 'whack-a-mole'. Her body is developing so quickly that as soon as she overcomes one CH obstacle we're only allowed a small window for celebration before another challenge pops up." At 12 weeks her head was the heaviest part of her body. She drifted side-to-side. Where her head lead, her tiny body followed. Sometimes she ended up in the wrong direction or off of her feet, tipping forward, "tail-over-teakettle," landing belly up. But, as her body has changed, her strength has developed, and her brain has learned to adjust, those issues have completely resolved. Currently, her center of gravity has shifted from her head to her belly. It happened really fast & her back legs were lacking the strength and coordination required to support her weight. One morning, after waking from a night of sleep, I put Willow on the floor to use her litter box and she just couldn't get there. She was desperate to, but she kept pulling to the side & tumbling over. Then struggling to get her feet underneath her, she would tumbled to the other side. And the more desperate she was to get to her litter box, the more frantic she got and the faster and harder the falls were."

Carolyn's priority is "to keep Willow safe and healthy first and foremost. But at this point, we're reaching for the stars and just trying to provide as secure an environment that allows." Carolyn modifies her environment as needed to ensure she's safe and happy and tries to encourage activities that will help her adapt to whatever relative weakness she is currently experiencing. "So right now, I've added some toys to her collection that will encourage use of her hind legs. It took a while, but, although I'm happy and willing to

pick her up after every fall, in the long run, I know it's better for Willow to learn how to get up on her own."



Carolyn says: "Everything amazes me about Willow. She's constantly adapting. She's "young, scrappy and hungry" to borrow a phrase from Lin Manuel Miranda's "Hamilton". She has heart in spades. She's as fierce as all get-out, and persistent! She doesn't give up! She will find a way! Even my wall of cardboard boxes I lined up to surround the perimeter...she got through. She finds a crack in the defenses and just keeps at it until it's a Willow sized gap. Then she reaches up and gets her claws into my fitted sheet and up she goes. (getting rid of low- hanging comforters and blankets for her to climb up was Step 1 in my attempts to keep her from getting on the bed... they were like rolling out the red carpet) I'm reminded of the velociraptors from Jurassic Park. How quickly they learn...constantly testing their enclosure looking for a weakness to exploit."



Carolyn decided to rename her Willow. Carolyn says she loves the plant's coloring, softness and the treat of nature they provide. She learned that most varieties are smallish shrubs, but they are very strong! Carolyn says of Willow's determined spirit... "why I think she might even believe she can fly! "

We will be checking in on Carolyn and Willow for updates on their life together in future issues.

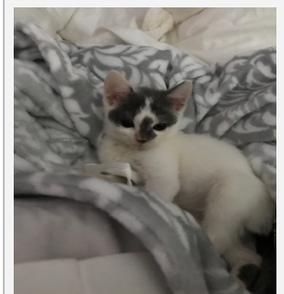
What is CH?

Cerebellar Hypoplasia is a non-progressive, non-contagious neurological condition that results in walking & balance problems. A kitten is born with "CH" when her cerebellum, the part of the can be stunted by several factors, most commonly if the mother contracted the feline in the womb.



Known for their "drunken sailor" walk, which is why they're known endearingly as "wobbly cats." The severity of a kitten's CH can vary greatly — even among litter mates. While some cats may only have a brain that controls fine motor skills and coordination, is underdeveloped at birth. A cerebellum's growth while pregnant or if there was some sort of trauma to the kittens while they were in the womb.

An underdeveloped cerebellum can result in underdeveloped or complicated mobility. CH cats are slightly impacted gait, others may have significant trouble getting around, if they're able to walk at all.





We wanted to present a picture of the cat population of our shelter, in order to give you, our readers, an insight into the scope of our work and commitment.

These 40 cats comprise nearly the entire population at our local shelter.

All have the need for varying degrees of human care and may never be ready for adoption. This is their forever home.

Each cat has a name and is loved for who they are. Being a "no kill" shelter, they will be cared for, as our own, for the duration of their natural life. We hope you share in our commitment.



Rikki's Refuge Animal Sanctuary



The photo of the 16 cats sleeping was taken by a volunteer at Rikki's Refuge, a huge rescue shelter that AFOC partners with. Rikki's Refuge in Orange

County, VA, is a 367 acre, no-kill, all species peaceful sanctuary supported solely by donations of kind and loving individuals.

The refuge is home to over 1200 animals of 20 different species, including but not limited to cats, dogs, sheep, goats, rabbits, pigs, emus, chickens, ducks, geese, a chukar, peacocks, and more.

This photo was not staged. It took the volunteer a year to get it correctly. This included sneaking up on them before daylight many times so as not to startle any. Finally, she was successful.



Have You Ever Considered Sugar Gliders as Pets?



Sugar gliders are small mammals that have become very popular relative to other exotic pets. The proper care of sugar gliders calls for a large cage, daily interaction, and a specialized diet. Sugar gliders, unlike common pet rodents, can have a lifespan of up to 14 years in captivity, so adopting one is significant commitment. They're available from shelters, breeders, and pet stores across the country and make excellent pets for people who take the time to learn about their needs before acquiring them.

Sugar gliders are playful, curious animals that typically love to hang out with both their cage-mates and their human caretakers. Given their natural affinity for pouches, they generally love to curl up in a shirt pocket or in a fabric pouch. Pouches designed for sugar gliders are typically available in pet stores.

They must be handled daily by their owners to become tame. Since they're nocturnal, they're best for

people who have time available to handle them at night. Given their quick movements and inquisitive nature, they must only be allowed out of their cages while closely supervised, in pet-proofed areas free of electric cords and other dangerous objects on which they might chew.

Sugar gliders should be housed in as large a cage as possible to enable them to jump, leap, and glide around. Minimum size cage requirements for a single glider are 3' x 2' x 3'. Securely locked, metal cages with bar spacing no more than 0.5" apart are best, as sugar gliders are notorious escape artists. They should be allowed out of their cages daily for exercise but only when closely supervised, as their curious nature tends to get them into trouble.

Cages should contain a small pouch or bag (commercially available) placed high in the cage for sleeping and hiding during the day. Cages may be lined with shredded paper or recycled paper-based

bedding. Bedding should be spot-cleaned daily and thoroughly changed weekly. Cages also should contain branches and shelves (also commercially available) on which gliders can perch at different levels within the cage. Bird toys and swings and smooth-sided exercise wheels meant for rodents also may be enjoyed by gliders.



Deciding on what to feed your sugar glider is a bit more involved than with most pets. There are many commercial diets available now, even in more conventional stores, but many glider keepers recommend specific products and homemade recipes. The right diet for a sugar glider should be a varied and nutritionally balanced mixture with the proper calcium to phosphorus ratio, as an imbalance can result in

Happy Tails!

Murphy, aka Cheetah, relaxing in his fur-ever home. He was rescued outside of our shelter in 2020 while he was just 5 months old.

He's such a sweet boy with a quiet and calm demeanor. We're glad to see his little personality is now coming through!



Got a happy tail story?

We'd love to hear how things are going with your 'happy tail' stories so please take a few minutes to jot us a note and we will share.



Meet our Volunteers!

At 10 o'clock on any Saturday morning you will find Toni S. at the AFOC shelter. Armed with cat teaser toys and brushes, she visits EVERY cat at the shelter; no one is ignored; no matter their temperament or disposition. In some cases, if a cat doesn't hiss at her each week, she says she feels slighted. She has no favorites. The ugly duckling or the scared & shy ones due to human abuse, are special to her.

Toni has been volunteering at AFOC for almost 6 years. She became interested in our shelter, when she began dropping off food donations on her way to visit New Britain Museum of American Art. After retiring from 30+ years in the Financial Services industry with Morgan Stanley and a short and wonderful stint in the restaurant business she was ready to volunteer.

When she asked about volunteering at the shelter, she was given an orientation by longtime volunteer Pat. Toni was one of three who attended the introduction to volunteering that day. But she was the only one who returned the next week to begin volunteering.

As a volunteer, she says she enjoys giving each cat treat, petting, and brushing for those who allow it. As she does this, she is trying to socialize those who need the help they deserve to become adoptable. With a shy cat, Toni says it's paying attention, talking soothingly, offering treats in your hand and to keep coming back so they know and trust you.

Currently Toni is assisting with adoptions. She is speaking and meeting with people who have expressed an interest in a specific cat or just want to meet our residents prior to making a decision. She makes sure it's a good match for all. Toni's advice about adopting ... "When adopting a shelter cat, a pet adopter has to be patient. Too many of these cats have been given up for the wrong reason. They did nothing wrong, but their trauma is still there. They will need time, sometimes a lot of time, to adjust to what they've been put through. They have to learn to trust again and then love.

Toni says a cat definitely has a say in who adopts them. "We've had wonderful cats who did not respond to their potential mom or dads until voila! in comes the ONE! Sometimes it takes more than one visit, as

we have seen devoted adopters do and it works."

Toni related one of her shelter memories...." Early on I arrived at the shelter one morning to find panic. Jacob one of the cats had disappeared! We scurried around, indoors & out calling him. Sometime later he was found in his room, on top of a kitty condo, under a blanket. His roommates, Rita and Charity never let on, but I could tell they were pretty amused."

Toni is a "mom" to two black cats, Gato and Sukey, sixteen-year-old litter mates that she adopted as kittens from AFOC. Gato has diabetes and IBD. He gets 2 shots of insulin per day and medicine each night. They are her heart and her laughter!

Toni says, "People should know that cats are so different from any other pet. They own you. They choose you. If you are fortunate enough to have that happen the rewards are unlimited for a lifetime!"

Other than felines, Toni loves music, movies, walking, hikes, reading, working out and hanging with friends and family with good food and affordable wine.

Happy Tails!

Gentle Jack Jones and Sweet Ruby Claire are now 2 years old and love running around chasing toys and waking their humans up very early every day as they are very into their schedules. Sitting in windows and chirping back at birds is a favorite pastime as well as breaking the occasional lamp while on a run about through the house. They sit and watch their humans make dinner regularly. They love to greet any guest that comes to their home especially those with a freshly washed head of hair (this is Jacks thing).



So much fun having them with us! Totally best cats ever!

PS: Their names borrowed from Grateful Dead tunes.



Animal Friends of Connecticut, Inc.

P.O. Box
370306
West
Hartford,
Connecticut
06137-0306

**Phone
(860) 225-
1339**

**E-mail
afoc@afocinc.org**



We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.animalfriendsofct.org
[g](#)

Our organization depends, and always appreciates, the generosity and involvement of people like you. Every contribution goes towards helping Animal Friends of Connecticut continue to rescue and shelter homeless pets.

Every little bit counts! Here's how you can donate.

Mail-In Donations:

Complete a donation form and mail your tax-deductible check today. Make your checks payable to:

**Animal Friends of Connecticut
POB 370306
West Hartford, CT.
06137-0306**

PayPal:

It is fast and convenient, and safe! You can now use your credit card and donate on-line through PayPal.

United Way:

Please specify that your donation is intended for AFOC.

Please use the following letters and numbers on the form: AG 0640.

I-GIVE Matching Contributions:

Register with I-Give online. Shop online with major retailers and help AFOC at the same time! All transactions will contain a percentage donated to AFOC.

Sponsorship Program:

We have many cats that are hard to place or not adoptable. We are looking for sponsors willing to sponsor a rescue cat by helping to cover the cost of food, litter, and basic medicine. Our goal is to sponsor every cat.

In Memoriam



- Robert Morelli in lieu of a Christmas gift for my brother-in-law Justin
- **Dina Plapler in honor of Brenda Semmelrock**
- Joseph Pilver in loving memory of my grandmother Michele Pilver, who loved animals & helping them more than anything else.
- **Hope Francis in memory of Beatrice Deresienski**
- Phil Brench in memory of Beatrice Deresienski
- **Randy Lewbart in memory of Beatrice Deresienski**
- Kevin Concannon in memory of Beatrice Deresienski. May her love for all living things inspire others
- **Raquel Parada in memory of Beverly Janowetch from Sherry, Shelby, Randall Reed and the WCAO family**
- Donna Annunziata in memory of Joe Annunziata from Carrie Shaw & family! Love you Papa Joe!
- **Richard McMahon in memory of Michele Pilver**
- Diane Green in memory of Michele Pilver
- **Carol Rosenbeck in memory of Miss Petti-Paws. A beautiful and loving cat of Yvette Bristol and grandson Jordon.**

Please reach into your heart and give what you can afford to help these animals get a second chance in life.

Your gift is tax-deductible.

We would be happy to talk with you about endowments, grants, gifts-in-kind, corporate sponsorship or other long-term support. Please call us at (860) 693-0303

Animal Friends of Connecticut, Inc.
P.O. Box 370306
West Hartford, Connecticut 06137-0306

Name _____
Street/P.O.Box _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
E-mail _____

- \$5.00 Giving \$100.00 Sustaining
\$10.00 Helping \$250.00 Sponsor
\$25.00 Contributing \$500.00 Patron
\$50.00 Supporting \$ Other

- Please send information on automatic transfer donation
Name/address changes: (please print clearly)

- I'd like to help. Volunteers please call 860-827-0371
I am interested in becoming a member. Please add me to your mailing list to receive the newsletter (new members only)

Animalfriends
OF CONNECTICUT